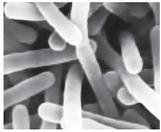


# Listeria Basics

## What is *Listeria*?



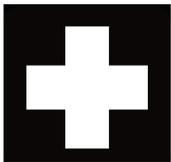
*Listeria monocytogenes* (Lis-TEER-ee-ah mon-o-sy-TOJ-en-eez) is a pathogen that, when eaten, may cause a serious foodborne illness called *listeriosis* (lis-teer-ee-O-sis).

## Where is *Listeria* found?



- Everywhere, including on plants and animals.
- In raw food materials or inadequately processed food.
- On floors and in floor drains, coolers, door seals, air vents, walls, and grease traps.
- On storage containers, preparation surfaces and equipment, and display cases.

## Why is it important that people know about *Listeria*?



- Each year, approximately 2,500 people contract listeriosis and it is estimated that 500 die.
- Anyone can be affected. It's particularly dangerous to:
  - Pregnant women
  - Fetuses
  - Newborns
  - The elderly
  - People with lowered immunity
- Symptoms may be *mild*:
  - Fever
  - Fatigue
  - Nausea
- to *serious*:
  - Spinal meningitis
  - Miscarriage
  - Blood infection in newborns

## What's important for retail supermarket deli or bakery associates to know?



- *Listeria* easily cross-contaminates raw materials or inadequately processed food.
- Heat or chemicals can destroy *Listeria*, but food may become contaminated after processing.
- It grows, although slowly, at refrigeration temperatures.
- Adequate cleaning of retail environment and good personal hygiene are important control measures for *Listeria*.

## Which foods most often harbor *Listeria*?



- Seafood salad
- Blue-veined cheese
- Lettuce salads
- Smoked seafood
- Mold-ripened cheese
- Soft fresh cheese
- Deli salads
- Lunch meat

Any food, however, can be cross-contaminated with *Listeria*.

Also see *Listeria* podcasts at <http://iddba.org/iddbacast.aspx>.